The Myrtle.

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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Frost Pictures.

PICTURES on the window,
Painted by Jack Frost,
Coming at the midnight,
With the noon are lost;
Here a row of fir trees,
Standing straight and tall,
There a rapid river,
And a waterfall

Here a branch of coral
From the briny sea;
There a weary traveller,
Resting 'neath a tree;
Here a grand old iceberg
Floating slowly on;
There a mighty forest
Of a torrid zone.

Here a swamp, all tangled,—
Rushes, ferns, and brake;
There a rugged mountain,
Here a little lake.
Thus a breath, the lightest,
Floating on the air,
Jack Frost catches quickly,
And imprints it there.

And thus you are painting,
Little children, too,
On your life's fair window,
Always something new;
But *your* little pictures
Will not pass away
Like those Jack Frost's fingers
Paint each winter day.

No; they will be lasting
As God's book of truth,
Whether made by Willie,
Johnny, May, or Ruth;
And your little pictures
Each its story tells
Of the good or evil
Which within you dwells.

Each kind word or action
Is a picture bright;
Every duty mastered
Is lovely in the light;
But each thought of anger,
Every word of strife,
Blemishes the picture,
Stains the glass of life.

Then be very careful,
Every day and hour,
Lest unseemly touches
Trace your window o'er;
Let the lines be always
Made by kindness bright,
Paint your glass with pictures
Of the true and right.

For the Myrtle.

Only a Week.

CHAPTER XI.

IT IS not necessary that we should be present while Alf and John tell the story, which we already know, of the night ride with the robbers, and the escape from them. Mr. Smith listened almost breathless while it was being told.

"You have truly had a narrow escape," he said, when the story was finished. "You will not surely undertake that way of travel again."

"No indeed," John replied, "if that officer does not come back with his evil suspicions, and carry us off to prison, we will take good care never to fall into like trouble again."

"I think there is no danger of his coming back for you. They will get on the track of the real robbers soon, and be too busy to come here again."

"Do you think they will find them?" Alf asked.

"Oh, yes, they are almost sure to be found. All rogues are caught now-a-days. There was a time, before cars and telegraphs, when thieves could get away from their pursuers, but that time has gone by."

"I am sure I hope they *will* be found."

"Why? Do you feel revengeful toward them?"

"Oh, no, not in the least. But it is right that wicked people should be punished until they repent of their wickedness. That is God's way of treating sinners."

"What makes you think that that is God's way? I don't see that any amount of repentance in hell will make any difference with the heat of the fires there," said Mr. Smith.

"I am sure I don't see why you think so."

"Because it says so in the Bible, and our minister preaches about it very often."

"About what?"

"About God's casting the wicked into hell. Does it not say in the Bible that 'the wicked shall be cast into hell and all the nations that forget God.'"

"Yes, it does. But does it not also say that 'the Lord will not cast off forever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies?'"

"Yes, but I do not take that to mean that he will have compassion upon the finally impenitent."

"I don't see that it makes any distinction between the penitents. It says simply, that 'The Lord *will not* cast off forever.' As for your finally impenitent, I don't believe in them. It says distinctly that God 'will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,' and I believe that He will."

"I don't understand that to mean that He is going to save those who turn away from His salvation."

"Doesn't it say *all men?*"

"Yes. But God's being *willing* that all men should be saved, and His saving them all, are two things."

"That is a very unfair interpretation. It doesn't say simply that God is willing; it does expressly say 'Who *will have all men to be saved.*'"

"But wicked men have turned away from Him and gone where He is not. How can He save them when they have gone out of His reach?"

"Ah! but there is no such thing as going out of God's reach, for He is everywhere."

"Not in hell."

"Yes, in hell."

"Well, well, boy, you are getting beyond your depth now. I have always thought that hell was where the Devil lived, and not God."

"Did not David find God everywhere? I give you his own words. 'If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there.'"

"Where does he say so? I never saw that place in my Bible."

"Well, it is because you have not looked where it is, in the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. For these words, exactly as I have given them, are in all Bibles."

John said, "If you would like to see them, Mr. Smith, I have a Bible here," and taking the Bible from his pocket, he turned to the Psalm, and showed the words that Alf had repeated.

"Thank you," said Mr. Smith, reading the words over twice very slowly. "They certainly are there, and David does say that he found God in hell; but it is a new idea to me. They say we learn something new every day, I certainly have learned something very new and strange to-day."

"I see no reason why God should not be in hell, as well as in any other place in the universe. He has made all places, and wherever his creatures are, there he will be to care for them."

"Do you think God goes down to hell to take care of sinners?"

"Why not?"

"I know no reason why not, only that he is angry with the wicked, and I should think He wouldn't care where they were, or what became of them."

"That is not God's way of being angry. He don't get mad as men do, and wish evil to those who turn away from Him, just for the sake of having some dreadful thing happen to them. 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.'"

"Then you believe, that in order to make God happy, *all* the wicked must turn from their evil ways."

"I do most certainly believe it. How could a God of love be happy, if He knew that any child that He had created, was to be eternally miserable? Why, you yourself are not happy when one of your children is miserable, and their little pains or troubles are always such that you

know they will be soon over. How much more wretched would you be, if you knew that their pain was not for an hour, but for eternity."

"Yes, but we do not suppose God to be moved by such feelings as we are moved by."

"Why should He not be, or rather why should He not be infinitely more unhappy over suffering as He is infinitely more tender and loving and sympathetic than we are?"

"I never thought of it in that light before."

"Very few people think of Him in that light. Though they go on talking of Him as if He were a God of love, and a God of mercy and tenderness, yet when they talk of His acts in punishing the creatures He has made, they make him out a fierce, revengeful fiend, subject to mean passions, and worse even than the devil himself."

"Yes, but you must not forget that the Bible speaks of him as a God of *justice* as well as a God of love and mercy."

"That is the very reason why I do not believe that He will punish any of His creatures forever. There is no justice in that, surely."

"What, no justice in punishing sinners?"

"I did not say that there was no justice in punishing sinners. We can all see that they should be punished, but not eternally punished."

"How long, then, do you think sinners should be punished?"

"Clearly, until they repent, and not one day beyond that time. All punishment after repentance is unmixed cruelty."

"That is decidedly a new way of putting it. I wonder what our minister would say to that?"

"Whatever he might say, it would make no difference to the truth."

"But if it is a truth, why should it not be the method of punishment adopted by men as well as by God?"

"I think it most certainly should be."

"But there would be difficulties in the way. It is so hard to tell when men are truly penitent."

"Yes, I know. We cannot look into the hearts of our fellowmen, as God looks into all hearts, and we might think a man penitent when he was only pretending to be so. But if now and then we were deceived, and let a man go who had not been punished enough, we could hardly make more mistakes than we make now."

"I believe you are right there. We could hardly make more miserable work than we have been making in our modes of punishment."

Mrs. E. M. Bruce.

The Little Witches.

QUEER little stitches,
You surely are witches,
To bother me so!
I'm trying to plant you;
Do stay where I want you,
All straight in a row.

Now keep close together;
I never know whether
You'll do as I say!
Why can't you be smaller?
You really grow taller,
Try hard as I may!

There! now my thread's knotted,
My finger is dotted
With sharp needle-pricks!
I mean to stop trying;
I cannot help crying,
O, dear, what a fix!

Yes, yes, little stitches,
I know you are witches,
I'm sure of it now—
Because you don't bother
Grown people, like mother,
When they try to sew.

You love to bewilder
Us poor little "childer"
(As Bridget would say).
By jumping snd dancing,
And leaping and prancing,
And losing your way.

Hear the bee in the clover,
Sewing "over and over;"
They don't understand.
I wish I were out there,
And playing about there,
In that great heap of sand

The afternoon's going,
I must do my sewing
Before I can play;
Now behave, little stiches,
Like good-natured witches,
The rest of the day.

I'd almost forgotten
About waxing my cotton,
As good sewers do;
And—O what a memory!—
Here is my emery,
To help coax it through.

I'm so nicely provided,
I'm rea'ly decided
To finish the things.
There's nothing like trying;
My needle is flying,
As if it had wings.

There! Good by, little stitches,
You obstinate witches,
You're punished, you know.
You've been very ugly,
But now you sit snugly
Along in a row!

For the Myrtle.

The Valentine.

FIVE children lived under the elms. The eldest was light and nimble, and her feet moved quick, like a robin's. The two next were sturdy boys, dark-eyed and slender, but always ready for a frolic when work was done. The fourth was a little maiden with deep eyes, and a cloud of wavy hair. The fifth was fat as a little pigeon, trotting about, climbing on book-shelves, and sitting on the sewing-machine.

One day, the two youngest took hold of their mamma's morning dress, and looked up in her face, and said, "mamma, you know the little white house with windows for eyes, and sitting like a frosted cake on the plain. Our cousin Marion lives there, and we want to send her a valentine."

Then the kind mamma smiled a smile, gentle as the moon-beam, and said, "We will see what can be done."

So they gathered round and plotted, and contrived; they proposed this, and that, and at last a very pretty valentine appeared, and they gave it to James, to carry.

James was a kind man, his face turned scarely to the right hand or to the left. And the winds blew, and the snows came and beat upon his coat, but he lingered not, for his boots were stiff and staunch, and went, clump, clump, through the banks and breaks, till he came to the little white house on the plain.

Its windows of eyes were shut, snow blankets wrapped it round, and it wore a night-cap of white ice. Good James went up the steps, making his boots go very softly as he slid the little white package under the door, rang the bell, and disappeared behind a snow-drift.

Then the house woke up, and a little girl become very merry. She was in her night-gown and standing in the middle of the floor when it rang. At the sound, she floated barefoot down stairs, hair like spun moonbeams streaming behind, and her mamma tripping after.

"That's a valentine, I know!" cried the little girl, whose name was Marion.

And it was.

And it was so pretty, and pleased little Marion so much, that she dreamed of gilt paper, and pictures, and pretty verses all night.

Trenton.

Jesus Whispering.

"WHAT is conscieuce?" said a Sunday School teacher, one day, to the little flock was gathered around to learn the words of life.

Several of the children answered—one saying one thing, and another another,—until a little timid child spoke out,—

"It is Jesus *whispering in our hearts.*"

Does Jesus whisper in your heart? When you do right, does he approve? When you do wrong, does he rebuke? Does he make your heart sad when you have sinned, and happy when you have done rightly? Be thankful, then, for this; and remember always to heed the Saviour's whisper, and then you will be safely guided to his heavenly home at last.

YOUTH is the vernal season of life, and the blossom it then puts forth, are indications of those future fruits which are to be gathered in the succeeding periods.—*Cicero.*

For the Myrtle.

Grandmother's Story.

LONG years ago, when I was a child,
I read in my books of a forest wild.
A forest deep, and dark, and old,
Where faires lived, I oft was told.
Oh, how I longed that forest to see,
And the fairies who dance so merrily
At midnight hour, when mortals sleep,
And earth is filled with silence deep.
So, rising one morn at break of day,
I wandered o'er hills and fields away,
Till I came to a hill, whose trees so high,
Seemed almost to touch the clear, blue sky.
And as I looked, it seemed to me,
That this the home of the fays must be,
For the songs of the birds and the voice of the brook
Were just as 'twas said in my story book.
So, treading lightly the moss so green,
Where wee twin-berries peeped out between,
I stepped within the wonderful wood,
And in the realms of Fairy-land stood.
I looked around with wondering eyes.
Above me were the clear blue skeis,
While at my feet the wild flowers sweet
Looked up the sun's glad smile to meet.
Wearied, I sat me down by the brook,
For so had done the child in the book,
And I thought by doing as she had done,
The fays to me would surely come.
I watched and waited, but all in vain,
For unto me no fairy came.
But as I rose to go away
A voice said softly: "Mortal, stay."
And looking, I saw in a wild rose sweet
The being I had so longed to meet.
Never—not even in wildest dream—
Had I so lovely a creature seen
On her forehead shone a dew-drop bright
Which round her shed pure beams of light,
And a wand of gold was in her hand,
Which all must carry in Fairy-land.
Then spoke the fairy soft and low,
While breezes rocked her to and fro,—
"Child of mortal, an answer give
To this my question: Where would you live?"

"O Fairy, let me live with you,
Give me a crown of evening dew,
Give me a wand to hold in my hand,
That I may dwell in Fairy-land."
The fairy touched me with her wand,
Then, flying to a place beyond,
Came back with a drop of evening dew,
And a golden wand she gave me too.
Then placing in mine her tiny hand,
She led me far into Fairy-land,
Till she came to the middle of the wood,
To a place where an ancient oak-tree stood.
With her wand of gold she touched the tree,
Then from as far as one could see,
There came from out the grass so green,
Numberless fays to meet their Queen.
We danced the live-long night away,
Till we saw in the East the coming day;
Then tapping with her wand a mound,
All the fairies went under the ground.
More dazzling far than mortal eye
Had ever seen in starry sky,
Was the home of the fairies under ground,
Where never was heard an earthly sound.
They took me 'neath the deep, blue sea,
Where shining waves rolled over me,
And the voices of mermaids, low and sweet,
Joined the voice of the mighty deep.
Over the forest old and gray
We rode on the wings of a butterfly gay;
On a plaintain leaf so large and strong
O'er the little brook we glided along.
And night and day we danced and played,
And still in Fairy-land I stayed.
But at last one day I thought of home,
Of father and mother all alone;
And then my heart was filled with the wish,
To feel once more my mother's kiss,
And my father's voice seemed calling me,
And his dear face I seemed to see.
Rousing myself, I looked around,
And at my side my father found,
Who had been searching the whole long day
For his little girl who had strayed away.
Every day as I wiser grew,
I used to think if it all were true,
And at last I knew it was only a dream,
And that Fairy-land I never had seen.

M. C. Schouler.

Forgive and Forget.

"I WOULD never speak to her again, the ugly thing!" said Louisa to her friend, who had been ill used by their playmate, Caroline Lee.

"No, Lou; I would not do that for anything," replied May. "I shall forgive and forget just as soon as I can."

Dear May, we all love you for that sweet spirit. As for you, my vengeance-loving Louisa, we advise you to study these words: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" and then ask yourself how dear little May could follow your counsel, and then at evening prayer say, "*Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*"

A Whole Day to do Nothing.

"If I only could have a whole day to do nothing,—no work and no lessons, only play all day,—I should be happy," said little Bessie.

"To-day shall be yours," said her mother. "You may play as much as you please; and I will not give you any work, no matter how much you may want it."

Bessie laughed at the idea of wishing for work, and ran out to play. She was swinging on the gate when the children passed to school; and they all envied her for having no lessons. When they were gone, she climbed up into the cherry-tree, and picked a lapful for pies; but, when she carried them in, her mother said, "That is work, Bessie. Don't you remember you cried yesterday because I wished you to pick cherries for the pudding? You may take them away. No work to-day, you know." And the little girl went away rather out of humor. She got her doll, and played with it a while, but was soon tired. She tried all her toys; but they didn't seem to please her any better. She came back and watched her mother, who was shelling peas.

"Mayn't I help you, mother?" she asked.

"No, Bessie; this isn't play."

Bessie went into the garden again, and leaned over the fence, watching the ducks and geese in the pond. Soon she heard her mother setting the table for dinner. Bessie longed to help. Then her father came back from his work; and they all sat down to dinner. Bessie was quite cheerful during the meal; but when it was over, and her father away, she said wearily, "Mother, you don't know how tired I am of doing nothing. If you would only let me wind your cotton, or put your work-box in order, or even sew at that tiresome patchwork, I would be so glad!"

"I can't, little daughter, because I said I would not give you work to-day. But you may find some for yourself, if you can."

So Bessie hunted up a pile of old stockings, and began to mend them; for she could darn very neatly. Her face grew brighter; and she presently said, "Mother, why do people get tired of play?"

"Because God did not mean us to be idle. His command is, 'Six days shalt thou labor,' He has given all of us work to do, and has made us so, that, unless we do just the very work that he gives us, we can't be happy." He has very hard work who has nothing to do.—*Presbyterian.*

Our Sunday Schools.

MASSACHUSETTS.

—The Worcester *Spy* contains the following interesting account of a Sunday School meeting in Rev. Mr. St. John's church. "The semi-annual meeting of the Sabbath School connected with the Universalist society was held last evening in the church, which was well filled. The veteran superintendant, Mr. Wm. Mecorney, presided. The report of the secretary, Daniel Seagrave, stated the whole number now belonging to the school to be four hundred and fourteen, including nine officers and thirty teachers.

CONNECTICUT.

—At the "Welcome" given to the new pastor and his wife at Norwalk, the children took a prominent part. "The exercises opened with singing by the children. A touching and appropriate address of welcome to the pastor and his wife were then given in behalf of the Sabbath School, by Miss Georgie Tourtellot, which was responded to with much feeling by the pastor. A poem was read by Miss Hattie Williams entitled, 'Wanted—A Minister's Wife'—which was received with applause. The remainder of the evening was spent in singing, mutual congratulations, and the partaking of a fine collation prepared for the occasion. The children's tree was handsomely decorated, and was soon stripped of its contents, much to the gratification of the younger portion of the assembly."

—Friday evening, Jan. 12th, was the great event to the children of the Universalist Society in Hartford. It was the annual festival which the society gives to the school every winter. It was a beautiful sight to see three hundred children assembled in Music Hall, every one of them determined to be the happiest one of the whole. Most of the society, and many visitors were also present, and all made very happy by the great pleasure of the children. The younger ones had it all their own way till after nine o'clock, when they were called to the banquet room, and the older scholars and friends engaged in a merry dance. A bounteous repast was furnished for all, young and old, and the evening passed off to the satisfaction and pleasure of all.

OHIO.

—Rev. E. L. Rexford, of Cincinnati, writes thus of our friends at Westerville, twelve miles from that city: "A few of them, without any special excitement, with no aid from the clergy, have banded together, and have built a very comfortable brick church that will seat about three hundred people. It is the result of pressing religious need among the peopte of the vicinity. *They have their Sunday School and a place for it,* and a religious house also. I have been up twice on week-day evenings and preached to them. I preach to no more eager or anxious people than those. It is quite an unusual undertaking without the aid of any minister, and the fact that it has grown out of their real wants promises much for their success."

WISCONSIN.

—Rev. J. S. Fall, writing from the united societies of Neenah and Menasha, says, "Our Sunday School, under the efficient management of our able and esteemed Superintendent, Mr. A. J. Webster, is increasing in numbers, efficiency and interest." Ana then follows an account of the Christmas festivities which we have given before.

ILLINOIS.

—Jan. 7th, in the Avon church, there was a concert by the Universalist Sunday School. Br. Davis says: "I have witnessed many such occasions. but never heard as beautiful singing and speaking by so many very little ones before; and their behavior was almost perfect. It filled a crowded house with joy unspeakable. Thanks to the children, superintendent, and teachers."

KANSAS.

—A friend in Lawrence says in giving an account of the Christmas services in their school: "We re-organized in the new church in February with but twenty scholars, being the remnant of the very interesting school we once had, but which had become scattered and lost through a vacation of seven, eight or nine months, necessitated by the want of a suitable place in which to meet. From that faithful twenty we have increased to upwards of one hundred in number. We have about three hundred and twenty-five volumes in our library. Our officers are, Mr. C. J. Lewis, Superintendent; Miss Eunice Pease, Secretary; Miss Kittie Jones, Librarian. We take twenty copies of the *Guiding Star*, and twenty copies of the MYRTLE, and the *Helper*. We have concerts on the last Sunday of every month. We hold Sunday School services, generally every two weeks.

Our English Bible.

The Bible which we now use in all our churches, and Sabbath Schools, and homes, is a translation made by the command of James I., King of England. Forty-seven learned persons were charged with the task. It was most carefully prepared, and was first printed in 1611. Attempts have been made at different times to improve this version of the sacred writings, but none of them have been very successful. Most readers like our present version the best, and it is not likely that any other will very soon take its place.

Miracles of Jesus.

The miracles were performed in the presence of many witnesses. There could have been no trick, no juggling, no mere sleight of hand. These things were seen by the apostles. They believed them. They proved this by going forth to the world to proclaim Christ and his doctrines. They encountered every obstacle, suffered every privation and danger, and some of them died to attest the sincerity of their convictions, and the truth of the miracles of their Master and Lord. These men could not have been deceived. The words of Nicodemus to Jesus were right: "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God were with him." If we believe in Christ, we must believe in the miracles which he wrought by God's power.

God Loves Me.

Every little child may say this, "God loves me;" for every little child is an object of God's tender love. No earthly parent can love a child more fondly than God loves all his little ones. But how many children are there in the world who do not know this, who never were taught it. It is in the Bible that we learn how God loves us. It is the blessed Gospel of Christ which tells us this truth. And because God loves us so truly, and fondly, and constantly, we ought also to love one another—to love our fellow-men. If we learned that God hated us, there might be some reason why we should hate one another. But if he loves us, and always will love us, then we are bound to love one another, to love our race always.

Life of the Saviour.

LESSON LXXIII.

JESUS AT THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

"The sheep hear his voice."

SCRIPTURE, — John x. 22–42.

Question. — Where was Jesus at the Feast of Dedication?

Answer. — John x. 22.

NOTE. The Feast of Dedication was established by Moses, but was held in commemoration of the restoration of the Temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was held in December and continued seven days. An account of its institution may be found in 1 Maccabees, chap. iv., in the Apocrypha. Solomon's Porch was on the east side of the Temple. Josephus says that it was a part of the work of Solomon which had remained.

Q. — What question did the Jews wish him to answer?

A. — John x. 23.

Q. — What works of his would answer their question?

A. — John x. 26.

Q. — Why did they not believe him?

A. — John x. 26.

Q. — What does he give to his sheep?

A. — John x. 28.

NOTE. The eternal life was like the life of Jesus—the spiritual and the moral life of the Saviour. This he imparted to his disciples.

Q. — Are he and the Father one in the care of the sheep?

A. — John x. 28, 29, 30.

Q. — Why did the Jews proceed to stone him?

A. — John x. 33.

Q. — To what fact in their law did Jesus call their attention?

A. John x. 34.

NOTE. An instance of this may be found in Ex. xxii. 28.

Q. — If it were lawful to call judges gods, what might Jesus claim without blaspheming?

A. — John x. 36.

Q. — If they could not believe he was the Christ, what did he ask them to do?

A. — John x. 38.

Q. — Where did Jesus go to escape the fury of the Jews?

A. — John x. 40.

Hidden Seed

Enigma No. 1.

1. A robber mentioned in the New Testament.
2. A beautiful Jewish maiden.
3. A daughter of Laban.
4. An order of celestial beings.
5. The mother of Samuel.
6. A son of David.
7. A fisherman of Galilee.
8. The second wife of Lamech.
9. "The field of blood."
10. A sister of Laban.

The initials of the answers form the name of a king of Babylon.

Carrie A.

Enigma No. 2.

I am mighty and I am good
Though often stained with martyr's blood.

I free the slave, and cure the blind,
And ne'er by fetters was confined.

Beheaded once, I played a part,
To win from Boaz hand and heart.

And was a mother in the line,
That gave to us your Lord and mine.

Little Sower.

Answers.

FEB. 3. Go to the ant, thou sluggard.

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